SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION

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C/O

DAZIMINA HANOI

19, Hai Ba Trung, Hanoi, DRVN

and all SVNR Embassies, Information Bureaux in foreign countries.

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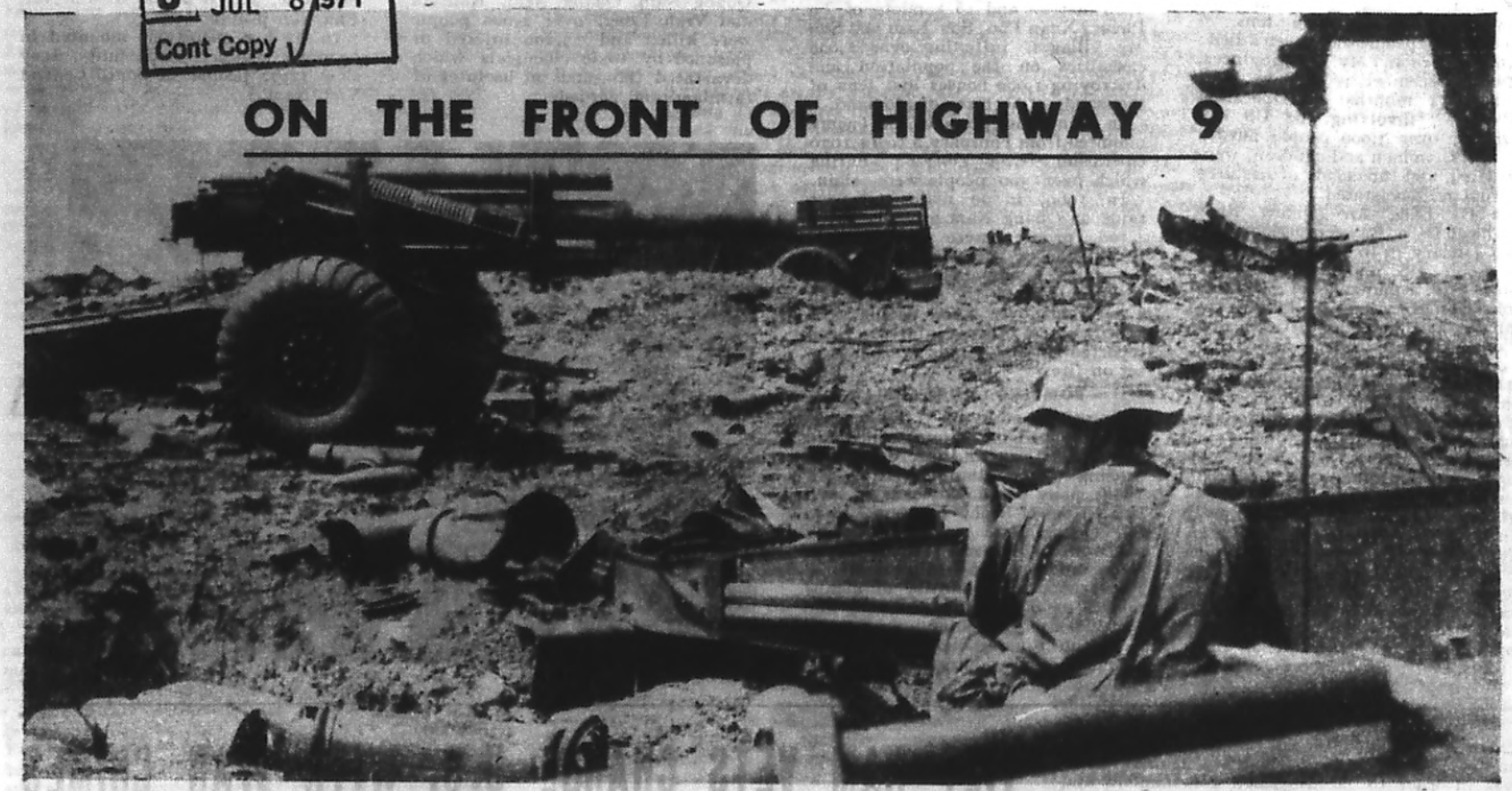
Cont Copy

ON THE FRONT OF HIGHWAY 9



Carcasses of US choppers, cannons and trucks littering the front of Highway 9. Yet Nixon claims that "one cannot conclude that it was a victory or defeat!"

editorial

THE INDOCHINESE PEOPLES WIN GREAT VICTORIES

THE Lao and Cambodian peoples together with the people of both South and North Viet Nam have just scored outstanding military exploits. The three peoples of the Indochinese peninsula have altogether proved how talented and clever they are in the fighting. Never before were the hostilities so violent, and never before the victories sogreat too.

The whole Indochinese peninsula resounds with joyous shouts. Our friends and the peoples all over the five continents are elated. We have won great victories!

ENTERING his third year of presidency, Nixon rash-ly played his "big military game": to win at any cost a few military feats on the battlefield, na mely cutting off enemy supply routes, interdicting attacks in South Viet Nam or smashing adverse forces there and in Cambodia. All this would give a new paint to the puppet army and justify the "Vietnamization" success, while ensuring the re-election of two Presidents: Thieu in this fall, and Nixon in the next.

That ambitious design was to be served by a series of big campaigns conducted in cambodia, Laos and South Viet Nam, the most typical and fierce of which being Highway 9.

Following the "special pacification" sinister campaign carried out in South Viet Nam in the first days of 1971, the US-puppets launched in late January 1971 the "Dewey Canyon 2" sweep in Northern Quang Tri. It was a large-scale operation that would pave the way and offer a leaning point to the invasion of Laos. In early February 1971, that country was invaded during the "Lam Son 719" massive operation in which 70 elite puppet battalions provided with US "unlimited support" by air and artillery fire power, were involved. The objective of that military move was the occupation of Tchepone, that "strategic position" and "concentration of enemy supply storages."

Meanwhile, the US-puppets launched the "1-71 Total Victory" operation with a force of 30 US Saigon and Lon Nol puppet battalions supported by US 1st Air Squadron, on an attack against North-Eastern Cambodia's liberated zone, chiefly against Kompong Cham and Kratié.

In addition, another operation was planned to assault the Boloven area, had the "Lam Son 719" and "1-71 Total Victory" campaigns' stopped the enemy in front and locked them up in rear, thus pressing them in the middle. But that thrust into the enemy flank was broken at the outset.

(Continued on page 3)

MORE BLOODBATHS AFTER SON MY

According to documents issued by the Committee for Denunciation of the US Imperialists and Their Henchmen's War Crimes in South Viet Nam in the three years following the Son My massacre (March 16, 1968), the US imperialists and quislings have perpetrated many other wholesale slayings against the South Vietnamese people. Here are some major cases up to the end of 1970.

I – OPERATION "KILL ALL, BURN ALL, DESTROY ALL."

In the last three years, the enemy has mounted tens of thousands of "sweeps" during which tens of thousands of people have been killed:

In Ben Tre and My Tho provinces, between December 1, 1968 to April 1, 1969 (4 months) in Operation "Express" involving the US 9th Division, over 3,000 people mostly old agers, women and children, were murdered, and thousands of hectares of cropland devastated.

At Ba Lang An (Quang Ngai province) in a "sweep" launched from January 13 to February 3, 1969 by 8,000 US and puppet troops under the command of General Cooksey on 6 villages belonging to Binh Son and Son Tinh districts, 300 inhabitants were killed, and 1,200 reported missing among the 11,000 inmates in the Van Thanh concentration camp.

East of Thang Binh district (Quang Nam province), between April 24 and May 23, 1969, over 300 people were murdered, 23 reported missing, and 4,000 herded in concentration camps.

In Rach Gia province, in June and July, 169 people were mown down and 198 others injured by gun shots of enemy troops.

In the U Minh jungle between Sept. 23 and October 26, 1969, the US and puppet troops took a toll of 250 civilians, set fire to 2,000 dwellings.

In Quang Ngai province, in October and November 1969 the US-puppet troops razed 4 villages (Son Loc, Tu My, Pho Loi, Pho Xuan) in Son Tinh district and 15 hamlets of Tu Phuoc, Xuan Pho, Son Nam and Son My villages, inflicting over 1,000 casualties on the population and destroying 1,000 houses and tens of thousands of hectares of cropland.

In Kien Tuong province, the enemy mounted from February 5 to 14,1970 Operation *"Cuu Long 2-4"* during which over 300 people were slain.

In 1969, in 90 major terrorist raids on Quang Nam province, over 4,700 people were shot dead, 12,400 houses burnt and 6,000 buffaloes and oxen abducted. In Ben Tre province, in the same year, in 4,000 raids, over 2,200 people were killed, 1,880 others injured, 2,200 reported missing, and 2,665 houses set on fire.

II – BOMBING AND SHELLING

In 1968, bombs of various kinds were dropped on many localities in Chau Doc town and Da Nang city, causing 900 civilian casualties. In 1969, many populated areas of Bien Hoa, Kon H'Rinh, Kontum, Phan Ri, Quang Nam were bombarded, with a toll of more than 1,148 people and over 70 fishing boats.

In 1969, the quantity of bombs rained in South Viet Nam by the US aggressors amounted roughly to 1,571,000 tons (including 15,000-pounders) or double the yearly average tonnage under the Johnson administration and equal to the quantity used in Europe during World War II. In 1968 and 1969, Hai Lang alone, a district inhabited by 80,000 people in Quang Tri province, received 1,028,000 bombs and shells.

III – TOXIC CHEMICALS

In 1969 toxic chemicals were sprayed many times on population centres of the provinces of Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Ngai, Tay Ninh, My Tho, including urban centres, poisoning 13,100 people, 273 of whom lethally (including 73 children from 1 to 15).

In 1970, in the provinces of Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Kontum and Vinh Long, over 1,000 people were killed and 13,200 injured or poisoned by toxic chemicals which devastated thousands of hectares of farmland and gardens.

IV – PAK JUNG HEE TROOPS' CRIMES

The Pak Jung Hee troops have committed since October 1968 untold crimes against the South Vietnamese people.

In Binh Dinh province on October 28, 1968 alone, they killed 320 people at Dong Bo. From November 11 to 16, 1969, in Quang Nam province, they massacred 700 inhabitants of the villages of Binh Dong, Binh Giang, Binh Trieu, Binh Hoa and Binh Doan.

From July 15 to 31, 1970 in the same province, they murdered 103 sea coast dwellers (mostly women and children).

From October 8 to November 2, 1970, they cut down 147 people at Sudi Che, and 6 others at Ca Nui, Phu Yen province.

In six big operations mounted in 1970 by regiment-sized units, they slew 1,392 people in South Central Viet Nam...

Toxic grenades, prohibited lethal weapons, used by Nixon in Indochina war

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VIET NAM VETS CHARGE U.S. WITH WAR CRIMES

(Excerpts from an article by **Patty Lee Parmalee** *in the February 13, 1971 issue of the American paper "Guardian")*

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

... For three days between Jan. 31 and Feb. 2, over 100 Vietnam veterans testified against themselves in order to accuse their commanders and their government of grotesque war crimes against the peoples of Indochina.

It was called the Winter Soldier Investigation and was organized by Vietnam Veterans calling for the investigation of US war crimes. About 800 people, including many veterans, attended the three-day conference ...

The testimony succeeded in making it evident that incidents such as the My Lai massacre are not isolated mishaps but are part of the US government's "standard operating procedure" in Southeast Asia.

... The 1st and 3rd Marine Divisions, 1st Air Cavalry, 5th Special Forces, 101st, 82nd and 173rd Airborne and 25th, 1st, 4th and 9th Infantry and the Americal Division were all represented by many persons ...

South Vietnamese youth enlisted at gun point to "Vietnamize" Nixon's war.

Aside from the victims of US aggression in Indochina, no people are better able to describe the horrors of Washington's genocidal war than the GIs themselves.

... Testimony on torture of prisoners and killing of civilians was extensive. Vets testified that they had seen and participated in a wide variety of practices outlawed by the Geneva Accords and that officers and military police either gave the orders or knowingly accepted the practices. Some of the men testifying had been officers and confessed to giving such orders.

Torture practices described by interrogation specialists and others to force information from "Vietcong" suspects or civilians include, among others:

The "bell telephone hour" — wiring any part of a subject's body (usually genitals) to field telephone wires and shocking him or her, apparently the most widespread technique, especially in the field; the same technique with the more vicious jeep battery; yanking a string around a suspect's testicles; beating; dunking in water; burning the penis with a cigarette; applying leeches till a suspect faints; putting suspects in a room overnight with an 8-foot python; disembowelling a live prisoner in front of others; slicing "bacon strips" out of a Vietnamese; throwing prisoners out of helicopters in front of others; letting vicious dogs loose at Vietnamese tied to trees; pulling out fingernails; making a prisoner sit next to a pile of dead "VC" bodies in the hot sun for six hours; threatening rape, usually of a daughter when the parents were suspects.

Why did they do it?

When asked why they participated in torture, the vets answered that it was standard practice, that they had been taught by the military to think of the Vietnamese as non-persons.

.... All the vets were visibly shaken by what they had to say, although they tried to testify in matter-of-fact, instructional tones. Some could not help crying...

When challenged by skeptics in the audience as to why they testified, one veteran answered: "I am here because I have nightmares about things that happened to me and my friends."

In keeping with the policy of producing a high "body count," prisoners were usually killed, the vets testified. Many vets said live prisoners are thrown out of helicopters...

... After prisoners were killed, their bodies were frequently disfigured. Some vets testified to cutting off ears as souvenirs or to prove their kill to get rewards; others mentioned cutting off heads and putting them on poles, slashing bodies, sticking severed penises in corpses' mouths, digging up graves.

Civilians tortured too

Civilians who were not even "Viet Cong suspects" were treated the same way. There was hardly a vet who did not have several incidents to relate on mistreatment of civilians—from raping, killing and even skinning women to killing 25 unarmed Vietnamese in an ambush. Many vets testified to burning entire villages without regard for the inhabitants, including revenge missions and contests to see who could destroy houses with the least fire.

Rape and torture of women were commonplace. One ex-Marine told a woman being stabbed in both breasts and a weapon shoved up her vagina... There was also extensive testimony on the use of CS gas and defoliants and other deliberate attempts to destroy crops.

THE INDOCHINESE PEOPLES...

(Continued from page 1)

A look at the time-schedule, plan and forces involved in US operations clearly shows that Nixon was bent on "winning a splendid round" in order to get out of mires and difficulties, and blazon himself a victorious President! It was not accidental that strategic forces, hard-core and most seasoned units were flung into these operations. Most modern US military science, knowledge and experience have been deployed and put to a test. US most basic war methods, namely: motorized infantry combined with air attacks, complex of base-camps defended by solid fortifications, "leap-frog" tactics, "hill-top enclaves," etc., all of them have been practised. On Highway 9 alone, 2,300 aircraft of various types, including 800 helicopters, kept roaring round the clock. Each day, 900 tons of bombs were released by B.52s. 15,000 pound-bombs, lazer-ray bombs, etc., were also used.

"This time," the Western press remarked, "Nixon was fully aware that his adversary would engage the fighting instead of dodging it or getting scattered away." Consequently, any eventual complications or mishappenings had been carefully examined, calculated and minutely pondered upon. Nothing had been overlooked and everything ready. When the operation started. Nixon and Co chuckled among themselves: "Dien Bien Phu! A Dien Bien Phu in reverse is awaiting the enemy!"

BUT in Cambodia, the "1-71 Total Victory" operation wound up in a total defeat. "The operation against the VC sanctuary had to be called off because of communist violent resistance," the US-puppets admitted. A Saigon military spokesman was reported by UPI on March 10 as saying that they lost 2,070 killed and 10,000 wounded. Of course, these figures are decidedly too "conservative." In fact, according to preliminary data, from Feb. 4 to March 3, 1971, in Kompong Cham and Kratié, 8,000 enemy troops were annihilated, 950 military vehicles (including 500 tanks and armoured cars) wrecked, and 50 aircraft destroyed or downed.

The "1-71 Total Victory" operation was thus curtailed and took a heavy toll in live forces and means of war.

However, for Nixon, the "decisive battle," the "key of failure or success," the "real turning point" in the war, lies in the "Lam Son 719" operation. That is why Highway 9 has become Indochina's hottest point, the US-puppets' bloodiest theatre and the most signal victory of the three peoples and their armed forces on that peninsula.

In spite of scrupulous preparations, no sooner had they appeared on the Lao territory, than GIs and mercenaries lost in a single day two of their élite battalions in Ghaki and La Tuong. Following this, they took two staggering blows on Peaks 500 and 456 where puppet Ranger Battalion 39 and paratrooper Battalion 8 of the 3rd Brigade were swiftly wiped out.

In addition, the annihilation of the 17th Armour Squadron resulted in the shattering of the "Lam Son 719" operation's Northern wing. The enemy could not move an inch. They clustered in Ban Dong and tried to thrust southward while probing and trying to make forward. But thunderbolts kept striking at their heads. In three days alone, the 3rd Regiment of puppet 1st Division was smashed by Southern Laos' liberation fighters in Phu Ko Boc and Phu Koc Tom. Enemy reinforcements were sent to Highway 9. But no amount of troops, planes or tanks could possibly stave off the lamentable debacle of the "Lam Son 719" campaign. They had to pull out of "Saddle" and "748" Hills. On Peak 723, one regiment was completely annihilated together with its reinforcements. Then down came the Ban Dong lightning just as their rout rang out. BAN DONG, that key-complex of base-camps for the military move into Laos, involves a considerable force of the "Special Mission" First Armour Squadron, a number of paratrooper battalions and the First paratrooper Brigade divided into several groups from Ban Dong to Kaki Bridge. Strongly supported by artillery, infantry and armour units, the Lao Liberation Army mounted a massive attack upon, and completely crushed, that base-camp complex.

Ban Dong Victory bears a paramount significance because that complex constituted the principal prong of the "Lam Son 719" operation. Ban Dong was to be used by the enemy: first, as a springboard for attacks if conditions permitted it; second, as an enclave if attacks turned out impossible; and third, as a place for safe pullout if the operation failed.

Ban Dong was a strong base-camp complex provided with sizeable effectives, full equipment and strong support. However, in a single brief fighting, that 20-square km-wide system of strongholds, was completely smashed. In all appearance, the enemy knew they would be attacked. They wanted and tried to take to their heels, but could not escape. The annihilation of Ban Dong put in the limelight the bankruptcy of every enemy tactical method, as well as the unquestionable failure of US aggression against Laos.

It was swaying Highway 9 toward a new turning point. On Khe Sanh front, the GIs were dealt repeated hard blows. In a 45-day fighting, the South Viet Nam PLAF, in co-ordination with Southern Laos front, wiped out 3,000 enemy, including 2,000 GIs, shot down or destroyed nearly 100 aircraft, wrecked 350 military vehicles, including some 100 tanks and armoured cars. The operation's starting base trembled. In their "Lam Son 719" operation, the enemy were struck in front and rear alike. Now, Khe Sanh could not escape a tragic fate.

On Northern Quang Tri theatre, the GIs and mercenaries experienced violent onslaughts in Central Trung Bo's coastal area and the Mekong Delta. Their "pacification" program was cut short. Numbers of their positions such as the Song Mao military sub-sector (Binh Thuan), Ngoc To Ba (Kontum), Phu Nhon (Darlac)... were shattered. Hundreds of military posts in Western Nam Bo (South Viet Nam proper) and Southernmost Trung Bo, were encircled and abandoned.

In Laos, they were badly mauled in Muong Phin, Boloven, Sam Thong and Long Cheng.

In North Viet Nam, the people and their armed forces, standing ever-ready, have meted out due punishment blows to US provocations and adventurist military acts, downing scores of American aircraft, strategic B.52 included.

THE great victories recorded on Highway 9 by the Viet Nam and Laos' PLAF together with the resounding military achievements of the Cambodian NLA in wrecking the "1-71 Total Victory" adventure, come to the front of everybody and unequivocally point to the irrevocable fiasco of the "Vietnamization" policy upon which Nixon pins much hope.

The big ambitious scheme of the US and mercenary Military Commands have gone in smoke. They wanted to cut off enemy supply routes. Their operation was smashed. They wanted to occupy Tchepone, but had to give up half way. They wanted to strangle their adversary but were attached without respite. Nixon wanted to win a military victory, a "Dien Bien Phu in reverse" but courted a stunning defeat. He wanted to play rashly once for all a "big game," that is: "winning all or losing nothing," but unfortunately, he "was not permitted to lose nothing." The whole US-puppet military potential in these operations was crushed by the Indochinese peoples and their armed forces. The most seasoned units of their strategic mobile forces were lamentably battered. Each of their formidable strategic methods lost in turn all its effect. Now, the total break-down of US strategic design is obvious. Nixon's risk of being a lame-duck President is too clear.

During their recent operations, particularly in Laos, the "Vietnamization of the war" strategic formula: "puppet infantry+US support" was applied at the utmost. Puppet élite units painstakingly propped up by Nixon for over one year now, were flung into the battlefield with US strongest cover, (at the time when 320,000 GIs are still present in South Viet Nam) while thousands of aircraft were supporting the mercenaries and when the GIs in Khe Sanh stood ready to jump in. Nixon's dispatch of puppet troops to Laos and Cambodia, was once again to test the combat efficiency of re-equipped mercenaries—the army that would eventually replace the GIs in continuing the war in South Viet Nam and invading Indochina under the "Vietnamization" program.

But the debacle of the "Lam Son 719" and the "1-71 Total Victory" operations indicates that no magic wand could possibly shore up these hords of sluggish, anaemic and depressed soldiers, in spite of maximum US support. How could that US-paid army (the mainstay for prosecuting the war, the basis for the Saigon administration and also an instrument for "pacification") stand up after being floored in successive rounds? The bankruptcy of the strategic formula: "puppet troops + US support" is the military fiasco of Nixon's "Vietnamization of the war." Besides, that failure points to the visible doom of Nixon's "Asian doctrine" which means actually aggression on Asian countries by the Asians themselves.

The bitter defeats suffered by the US and its puppets on the Indochinese fields have shaken their strategic posture which is now more vulnerable and has to shift onto the defensive and infallibly to move back. In Cambodia, the Lon Nol—Sirik Matak clique is sinking into a rotten morass. In Laos, the US and its henchmen there are facing a precarious situation. In South Viet Nam, their difficulties have multiplied. The US reverses in Cambodia and Laos while panicking US placemen in those countries, deals a staggering blow at the Saigon administration's weakening backbone.

Recent developments on the Indochina theatre testify to the outstanding maturity of all the Indochinese patriotic armed forces in every respect. It provides further proof of those fighters' high combativeness and their respective Commands' talented guidance in strategy and tactics. Keen command combined with fighters' valiance, experience and cleverness, constitutes a miraculous might that shatters the enemy.

Indochina's resounding victories, particularly on Highway 9, moreover illustrate the finest co-ordination and splendid collective fighting ever displayed by the armed forces of the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Lao peoples.

AS a result, a new development of those forces is taking shape. A fresh source of inspiration and encouragement, a new combat spirit, innovation in more efficient fighting styles, are emerging. The urban population's struggle will surge ahead. Beaten black and blue on Highway 9, the US and its mercenaries are engaging in a new come-down. Their dramatic military adventure will invite political disasters.

However, Nixon strives to heal the pains and salvage the wreck. The three Indochinese peoples' fight goes on, hard and arduous, but unprecedented advantages are in their hands. They have won victories and are winning still greater ones. No sacrifices or hardships can shake their will to drive completely the US imperialists out of the Indochinese peninsula.

SOUTH VIET NAM

Wounded but elated! Young "dung si" (valiant fighter) Tran Binh Minh, happy to be at the field.

THE BAMBOO Valley

SOME people who passed through Khe Tre for the first time complained that bamboo shoots there tasted bitter. I didn't quite believe that, sure as I was that only the cooking was in fault.

When I asked the question of my Van Kieu guide, he nodded his head: "Yes, they do taste bitter. I've passed there many times and found this."

"Why?" I asked.

"If you trust me, I'll tell you the story: Once upon a time..."

The phrase "once upon a time" had always attracted me from a child, as I was fond of wonderful fairy tales. So even though the track was narrow and tiger grass was thick and high, I kept walking close to my guide to be able to hear him.

"Once upon a time, a Van Kieu mistakenly shot dead an elephant of the king," he began. "The king flew into a passion and ordered him to fill a basket elephant with coppers if he wanted to atone for his wrong-doing. But the man was so poor that he could only fill half a leg of the mastodon and died. His son who had to redeem the fine for him could only fill another half leg with coins. As a punishment, the king made the young man an elephant-driver and sent him to cut grass. Usually he brought back two basketfuls of fodder which he carried home with a bamboo pole. As the elephant grew up, it ate a bigger quantity of grass. The man who now grew old was too weak to collect enough feed. At his wits' end, he fled to the jungle, planted the carrying pole onto the ground and shed bitter tears. Meeting a wet fertile soil, the bamboo pole took roots, grew into a bush, then a forest of bamboo trees. As the bamboo pole was watered by bitter tears, the bamboo shoots were bitter too even when they were cooked with venison or chicken. That bitterness remained till now with the bamboo trees in that valley."

ON my way to the front, I thought over and over of the fate of the elephant-driver. What became of him afterwards? Nobody knew anything else except what my Van Kieu guide had told me.

In another unit I made acquaintance with Ho Dzung, a young soldier. Aware that the Bamboo Valley appealed to me, he said: "I know of another old man in Bamboo Valley, not your elephant-driver. If you want to hear..."

"Very much indeed," I replied.

"A liberation unit was spending the night at T. village," he said. "Informed by traitors, immediately the following day, enemy troops came and arrested the family of an old man who had a son in the Liberation Army. They tied their victims to six stakes and asked, "Is it true that you treated Viet Congs to venison last night?'

No answer. The ruffians cocked their guns. The wife and four children shut their eyes; but the old man kept his open, saying: 'I'm responsible for what I did, leave them alone!'

"If you want to save the lives of your wife and children,' they said, "show us where the Viet Congs are hiding. We'll spare your people and give you 10 kilograms of salt per capita captured...'

"After pondering a while, the old man nodded: 'Let go of my folks first,' he said. The enemy did as requested. The villagers were most incensed at this 'betrayal' of the old man. However, when he led the enemy across a stream, everyone heaved a sigh of relief as, because of the fog, the old man had not taken the liberation fighters along that way the morning before. Meanwhile, his family was running into safety.

"He led the enemy troops from one cave to another in search of 'Viet Congs.' They could find none and lost their bearings in Bamboo Valley. This was the intention of the old man. However, he had not noticed one of the ruffians who, with his jungle knife, slashed bamboo shoots he met on their way. When they were led back to the starting point in the valley, and saw the marks, he shouted: 'You have deceived us, where are the Viet Congs?'

"Immediately the old man pointed to his chest and cried: 'Here they are, don't try to look for them any longer'.

"The enemy troops were tired. Their strength was failing them. They only did some dozen metres the whole day. Finally they tied up the man, one of them yanked out a knife and threatened him: 'If you don't take us out of here, we'll chop your arms off.'

"The old man stood erect unruffled, like an old bamboo tree, and said: 'Do what you like, we still have sixty two million arms left.'

"They cut off his arms then his legs left. Still the man cried: 'We still have sixty-two million legs left' and died."

I remembered Ho Dzung's flaming eyes when he told me the story. He constantly gazed in the direction of the Bamboo Valley, holding tigh an AK gun in his hands. I had never seen a Van Kieu youth speaking of the enemy in that valley with such a hatred-burning look.

Now I passed through Bamboo Valley but could not make any difference between the bamboo bush which sprouted from the carrying pole watered by the tears of the elephant-driver and that soaked in the blood of the courageous old man from T. village who even in his last minute believed in the strength of a 31-million people rising up to wrest back national independence.

Five months had passed by. As a soldier and not a botanist, I knew for sure that that immense forest of bamboo trees had grown at the cost of the tear, and blood shed by the Liberation fighters. The rustle of bamboo leaves sounded like a whispering of the story of what the forest had witnessed.

After negotiating a slope I turned round and looked back at the Bamboo Valley. Innumerable bamboo trees were waving good-bye to us. It was then that I saw Ho Dzung, bringing up the rear, his pack on his back, his shovel and tommy gun-and something looking like... a long bamboo pipe on his shoulders.

On the two days spent at the last camp before taking up position on the battlefield, he never stopped paring his bamboo pipe with his knife and polish it with "priet" leaves. I finally came to realize that Ho Dzung was making a flagstaff.

Returning from a briefing about the coming action, Ho Dzung also made a model for his mates with five pebbles representing five blockhouses, the biggest one being the main post.

"When number 6 has checked the last petard," he said to his mates, "I'll go up first, you flank left and you go with the chaps on the right and make a thrust into the signal centre."

Then he gave instructions to a friend sitting by him: "When you have made sure that you're within shooting-range, fire a shot, understand!"

His mate nodded. Turning to another one, he said: "Let off a burst for your chum to fire the second shot. Try your best to silence the sixth resistance nest of the enemy. Our three-man team will use hand grenades to wipe out the remnants of the garrison and occupy the signal centre. Pending further orders from higher level, we'll remain there to cover the advance of the second group..."

While giving orders, Ho Dzung continued to rub the bamboo pole with "priet" leaves until it became as sleek as a silver cylinder.

Only shortly before he left the last refuge ready for the assault did he fix the flag to the staff. He held the latter in such a position that it did not hamper the movements of the storming party.

When the last mine had done away with the wire entanglements, Ho Dzung dashed forth through the breach with the golden-starred red flag which, in the flashes of the shelling, looked like a streak of fire. In the light of flares, the flag was seen rushing forward and was planted on the roof of the signal centre with the bamboo staff taken from Bamboo Valley. Hardened by the fire of the battle, it now clung to the soil just snatched back from the enemy's hand and opened into a flower of glory.

VU VAN BAO

Spring on the mountain

THE 5th WHEEL OF NIXON'S CHARIOT

IN implementation of the Nixon doctrine, whose essence is "pitting Vietnamese against Vietnamese," "Indochinese against Indochinese" and "Asians against Asians," the Nixon administration has been putting into practice the strategic formula: Saigon infantry + US support on the whole Indochinese battlefront. It has made several tests but all have met with shameful failure.

In the aforesaid formula, the US has paid great attention to the use of the puppet infantry. This is an important link in the "Vietnamization" of the war scheme whose outcome will decide the fate of this strategic formula, "Vietnamization" and the Nixon doctrine itself.

The White House, the Pentagon as well as the US Command in Saigon have been raising a ballyhoo about the "growth" of the puppet army. They have mentioned the latter's improvement, marked progress, good combat efficiency and important successes. They have awarded medals to puppet officers and men to advertise this mercenary army, in defiance of what has been happening on the battlefields of South Viet Nam for more than 10 years now as well as in Cambodia and Laos recently.

A MERCENARY ARMY, WITHOUT AN IDEAL AND WITH A TRADITION OF DEFEAT

Originating from "forces suppletives" battalions of the French army of aggression — the BVN (Vietnamese Battalions) — with a "national" label put on it by Ngo Dinh Diem and moulded by US General O'Daniel into a professional mercenary army on the South Korean army pattern, the Saigon army once was the tool of a quisling administration hated and abhorred by the people.

Despite US efforts to doll it up at all costs, this puppet army has remained one with no ideal, fighting for the interest of a handful of rotten and anti-national rulers, and serving as an instrument of the imperialist aggressors for the repression of the people. As a French journalist commented, "they (the puppet soldiers) have no stake at all in the fighting, so why should they shed their blood? All this is nonsense." That is why, they have repeatedly been knocked down by the Vietnamese people's revolutionary troops. They have not been credited with any military success. By tradition a defeated army since the French time, they had been trounced by the South Vietnamese who had not a single rifle right in the concerted uprisings under the Ngo Dinh Diem rule. They were heavily battered in the special war and badly mauled in the limited war. Nixon has been trying to prop up this army and assign to it the task of replacing the US expeditionary to prolong the war, has deployed it into the Cambodian and Lao battlefields with the hope of getting some military gains to inflate it and conjure away its defeatist obsession. But it has successively been thrashed in the "rural pacification" program, on the Cambodian battlefield and in South Laos. Since even the formidable US army has been outwitted and forced to gradually withdraw from South Viet Nam, how can the puppet troops, a mercenary army without an ideal and repeatedly worsted on all battlefields hold on its own?

A HETEROGENEOUS AND DISINTEGRATING ARMY WITH A SAGGING MORALE

The weak and wobbling position of the Saigon army and the Saigon administration has been worsening under the blows of the South Vietnamese revolutionary movement. Following "Vietnamization," since 1969 the US aggressors have been trying to beef up the former comprehensively. The US and its Saigon stooges have been raising its strength, modernizing its equipment, and step by step committing it to the frontline instead of the GI's. To draft youths in the army, they have been resorting to bribery, enticement, deception and especially forcible measures such as sudden traffic hold-ups, raids on markets, house searches... By replenishing the regular army with recruits and inducting all those living in the temporarily controlled areas from 13 to 55 into the "civil guard" and at the same time providing them with new US weapons and military equipment, the US-quislings have created a really "frightful army." These measures have been described by the Nixon administration and its lackeys as promising steps, steady marks of progress of the puppet army and satisfactory and confidence-inspiring! But all this has been sheer wishful thinking.

About the Saigon army and its combat effectiveness, many from US political circles and Western public life have expressed serious doubts.

In fact, under the staggering strikes of the South Vietnamese army and people, the puppet army has been going to pieces. A puppet general has admitted that every year, some 130,000 Saigon soldiers desert, and said "this disclosure was no novelty." Assessing the quality of his troops, puppet General Do Cao Tri once revealed that "out of every 100 soldiers 75 desert and of the 25 left only 10 join the fighting" (*AFP* — October 17, 1970). Desertions and mutinies in the puppet army have been increasing day by day, and the US aggressors have had to cry out that it is a grave threat to "Vietnamization"... The puppet troops' refusal to fight has been the biggest headache for the US. If forced to go into action, they will readily cross over to the opponent side to avoid the fighting, which fact has been amply substantiated by developments on the Indochinese battlefront, especially on the Southern Laos battlefield. To instil in such a decaying and ineffective mercenary army whose morale has been continuously on the downgrade greater combativeness, all-round capabilities and higher fighting spirit which the US troops themselves have lost in the past few years is really the US Command vain efforts.

AN INCAPABLE AND GOOD-FOR-NOTHING ARMY

IN the first years of the Ngo Dinh Diem rule, Washington, unstingily praised the "republican army" as the 3rd most powerful army among South-East Asia. But in fact, this army of over half a million men was only used for herding people into "strategic hamlets" and repressing mass movements for democratic freedoms and better living conditions but it even made a poor show in these jobs. It could not even defend the puppet administration. Each time the people rose up to wrest back mastery of the country, this army crumbled together with the puppet administration. In the special war the "government army" was badly beaten by the Liberation Armed Forces and disbanded by big chunks. In the limited war, this incapable army with such "cowardly men, having no fighting spirit," as remarked by Western commentators, had to see to the "house-keeping" and let the American troops do the fighting. But they could not even get this "modest" duty done. The South Vietnamese army and people got the upper hand on all battlefields and shattered the two enemy pincers — "search and destroy" and "pacification." Especially in the 1968 spring general offensives and uprisings, the patriotic forces drove both the American and puppet troops into a corner. The US had eventually to operate piece-meal withdrawals of its troops and the collapse of the inefficient Saigon army appeared unavoidable. Thompson, Nixon's "pacification" adviser, described the Saigon army as a boy who had survived measles and mumps and now might be affected by tuberculosis and heart-disease while the doctor was away (*Newsweek*-October 26, 1970). However, with his obdurate scheme of war prolongation and extension, Nixon had no other way than to strive to maintain and make use of this decaying army to realize his neo-colonialist views upon South Viet Nam. A big program aimed at consolidating the puppet army so that it could assume all the ground actions by Summer 1971 was worked out. Round-ups for youths took place everywhere. The Pentagon poured arms and ammunition and other war materials into South Viet Nam to arm to the teeth this moribund mercenary army. But US firepower could in no way shore up the puppet troops' sinking morale. Greatly satisfied with the "decisive firepower" doctrine, the American strategists took no account of the political factor and the puppet troops' fighting spirit. The US has been applying "maximum firepower" and this has been unceasingly stepped up under the Nixon administration.

Never before has a single indigenous army been supported by such an intensive firepower as the Saigon army in the recent period. But it has been labour lost. Mutinies and collective desertions have become daily occurrences in South Viet Nam. Mass flights or hurried surrenders of puppet troops, including all staff members of a brigade, the whole CP of a battalion... on the Cambodian and Lao battlefields following heavy fighting have been eloquent evidence enough. It is crystal clear that millions of tons of US bombs and shells cannot help boost the puppet troops' morale. The views of Clausewitz, a well-known German strategist in the last century, that "morale is the most important factor in all wars," and that "best weapons can be effective only when they are in the hands of determined fighters," conceptions regarded as outmoded by the American war leaders, have received fresh confirmations on the battlefields of South Viet Nam as well as of Cambodia and Laos.

According to Francis Fitzgerald, an American Viet Nam watcher, the Saigon army of more than one million men which the US has been trying to build and consolidate for several years now is the most dangerously instable army in South Viet Nam.

Can such an army help realize Nixon's dream of prolonging the aggressive war and achieve a military victory on the South Viet Nam battlefield? And where will "Vietnamization" lead to? The answer is quite clear. Like a man climbing a steep hillside, Nixon now is getting tired and thirsty, and at the same time has yelled himself hoarse and come across a poisonous beverage. The Saigon army is just like a worm-eaten walking stick of Nixon on the path of "Vietnamization" and of the doctrine bearing his name.

THANH HONG

Better to surrender than to die. This Saigon Colonel for once agrees with the rank-and-file.

Nixon's much-vaunted mercenary heroes! Their war cries: "Spare me!"

OPERATION "LAM SON 719" COMPLETELY FOILED

- **4** brigades, **2** regiments of Saigon puppet army wiped out
- **15,400** enemy troops put out of action
- **496** aircraft, **586** military vehicles destroyed and captured

(Lao PLA High Command special Communiqué)

"OPERATION Dewey Canyon II (later code-named "Lam Son 719") conducted by the US and Saigon puppets against Southern Laos has ended in complete defeat.

Our armed forces and people have won total victory in this historic campaign.

In their passive and losing position the US imperialists and the Saigon stooges had ventured to launch a military operation to invade our country. They had dispatched huge military force of about 45,000 men, belonging mostly to the general reserve force of the Saigon puppet army, an important part of the US forces and a large quantity of modern war means to Highway 9 with Dong Ha and Khe Sanh bases as staging area for attacks against Southern Laos. They had hurled into Laos more than 20,000 puppet troops as the striking force of aggression with the combat co-ordination of a big US air armada and the participation of part of US troops. About 25,000 troops mostly Americans had been spread along the highway between Lao Bao and Dong Ha (South Viet Nam) to serve as a rear reserve force.

To lend a hand to the invaders, the Vientiane and Thailand stooges from Seno and Pakse bases had struck West of Highway 9 and the Boloven High Plateau.

Behind this operation lay very big ambitions, namely, to cause great difficulties to the patriotic war of the peoples of the three Indochinese countries against US aggression and for national salvation, in an attempt to turn the war situation in Indochina to their advantage, stave off the failure of the "Vietnamization of the war" programme in South Viet Nam, pick up the cudgels for their lackeys in Laos and Cambodia who are in a bad fix, testify to the effectiveness of the reactionary "Nixon doctrine," and stack chips for Nixon's eventual re-election to the Presidency.

THE US imperialists and their lackeys, however, have committed an extremely grave mistake.

All the mad illusions of Nixon and the puppet cliques in this operation have been knocked galley-west.

Right on February 8, when the enemy troops began moving big into Laos, our armed forces and people, fully prepared, dealt them powerful initial blows, causing heavy losses to their troop landing.

Our forces blocked the enemy columns at Ban Dong, Chaki and Phou Co Bok. They could not even move one step forward.

Meanwhile, our forces wiped out a battalion of Vientiane puppet troops moving to Muong Phalan to co-ordinate with the US and Saigon puppet troops, and destroyed or decimated 4 other Vientiane battalions in the Eastern part of Boloven — Nam Luc area.

Getting bogged down, the enemy had to switch on to the defensive and huddle in hilltop enclaves. From February 13 to early March, our forces launched relentless waves of powerful attacks, and successively destroyed the enemy bases at La Tuong, Chaki and Hill 456, wiping out the 3rd Paratroop Brigade and the 21st Ranger Battalion, and smashed all enemy counter-attacks in Northern Ban Dong, wiping out the 17th Armoured Regiment, part of the 11th Armoured Regiment, and the 8th Paratroop Battalion Meanwhile, on the Khe Sanh front, the South Viet Nam Liberation Armed Forces destroyed the 39th Paratroop Battalion on Hill 500, north of Lang Son. The enemy's Northern prong was broken.

At the same time, our forces successively wiped out the enemy at Phou Co Bok, Phou Coc Tom, and Hills 405 and 619, heavily mauled and repelled the enemy's Southern prong.

The main enemy entrenched camp in the Ban Dong—Kaki area was put under siege and heavy pressure.

Faced with heavy setbacks which upset their initial plan, the enemy sent reinforcements drawn from the battlefields of Cambodia, and the 5th Zone and Western Highlands (South Viet Nam) to replace losses and go on with their plan. They changed their tactical manœuvres, resorting to leap-frogging from hilltop to hilltop in the mountain ridges from Western Ban Dong to Southeastern Tchepone, in an effort to produce an imaginary victory likely to cover up their defeat. However, they were repeatedly attacked and annihilated by our forces.

The latter immediately tightened their siege on the enemy main complex at Ban Dong. After making short work of a string of enemy bases on Hills 639 and 748 and inflicting heavy losses on the 2nd Infantry Regiment, our forces moved in and destroyed the 1st Regiment of the enemy 1st Infantry Division on Hill 723. The bulk of the enemy forces in Western Ban Dong was wiped out.

Faced with the danger of total annihilation, the enemy sought every way and means to escape.

General Sinkapo and Lao PLA High Command Officers.

In the afternoon of March 18, our men launched a large-scale attack, with close co-ordination between the various services, against the principal defence complex of the enemy. By the morning of March 20, our troops had neatly wiped out the enemy troops, completely liberated the Ban Dong area, and put out of action the bulk of two brigades and four artillery battalions of the Saigon puppet army, and blasted all their tanks and armoured cars.

Sweeping forward victoriously, our troops assaulted and occupied Peak 660 south-west of Ban Dong, virtualy annihilated the 2nd Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division, and wiped out the 147th Marine Brigade on Peak 550 (south-east of Ban Dong).

Since late January 1971, when the enemy began moving their troops to Highway 9, the South Viet Nam People's Liberation Army on the Khe Sanh battlefield has continually attacked the enemy, out their land, air and waterways, harassed their operational HQ, storage areas and US units at rear defence lines, wiped out numerous enemy troops, mostly American, destroyed a large quantity of war means, caused great difficulties to them in deploying troops and carrying supplies, in good co-ordination with the Southern Laos battlefield. When the enemy began fleeing from Southern Laos, the liberation forces on the Khe Sanh battlefield blocked their retreat, wiped them out, violently attacked their bases and Command Posts at Khe Sanh, Ta Con, Lao Bao, Ta Puc, inflicting heavy losses on them.

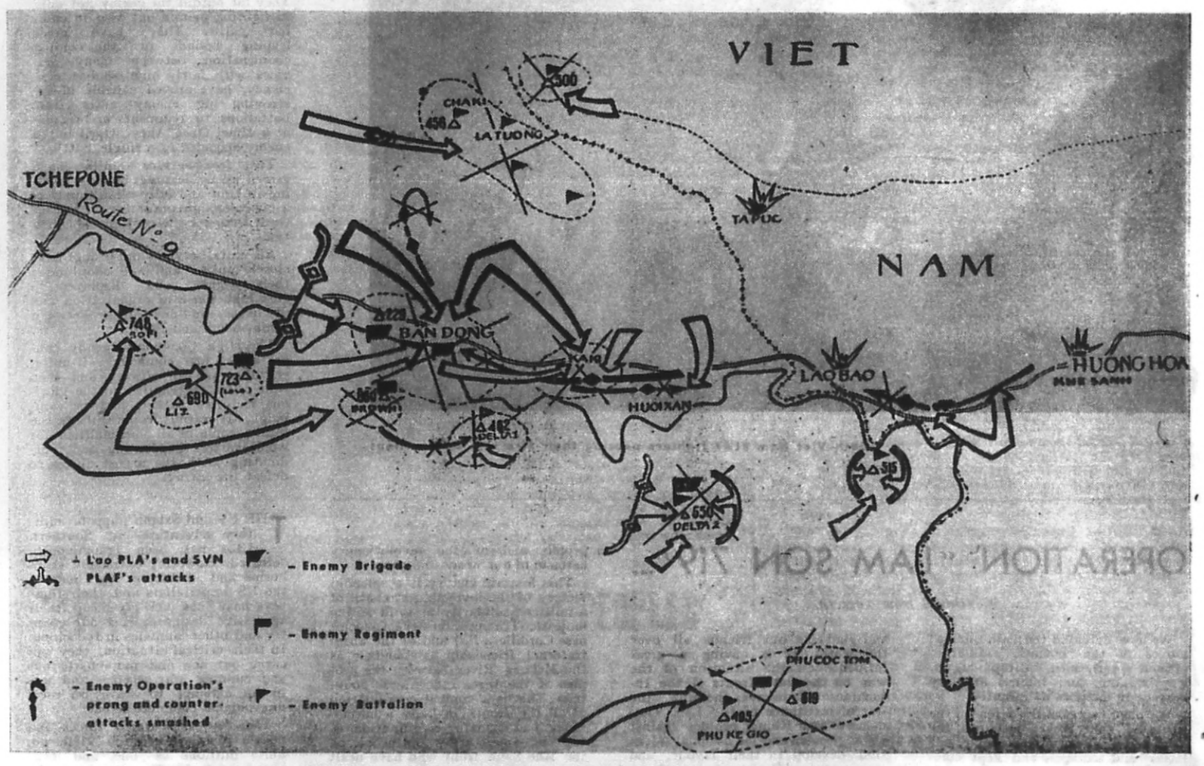
THROUGH 43 days' and nights of continual, valiant and resourceful fighting, and with a very high fighting spirit, our armed forces and people have recorded tremendous and very glorious victories.

We have wiped out an important part of the forces and war meterials of the US and Saigon puppets belonging to all arms and services: paratrooper, armour, marine, ranger, main-force infantry, mostly of the general reserve, the hard-core of the Saigon puppet army; *put out of action 15,400 ennemy troops including 200 American, and captured 1,000 others including many field and company officers.*

In terms of units, we wiped out 2 brigades of the Saigon Paratroop Division, the 1st "Special Mission" Armoured Brigade (composed of 4 battalions) and the 147th Marine Brigade, wiped out the 1st and 2nd main-force Infantry Regiments, heavily decimated the 3rd Infantry Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division; badly mauled the 1st Ranger Brigade and 258th Marine Brigade, put out of action 8 artillery battalions and heavily decimated 5 other ones.

In terms of war means, we *destroyed or captured 496 aircraft* (mostly helicopters), *destroyed or captured 586 military vehicles* (including 318 tanks and armoured cars), *destroyed or captured 144 heavy artillery pieces, more than 5,000 weapons of various kinds, a large quantity of important documents and military equipment.*

(Continued on page 8)



BAN DONG *Assaulted*

MORNING of March 18. Ban Dong had completely changed since the enemy turned this lovely mountain range into a big entrenched camp. The luxuriant coconut groves beside neat rows of cottages on stilts covered with corrugated iron roofs had gone. All that remained was a drab grey of soil littered with hundreds of carcasses of crumpled trucks and aircraft. On the river beach where not long ago gracious Lao girls used to come to fetch water and wash their limen, there lay now wrecked helicopters. From the central sector of the enemy headquarters, flames were leaping high into the sky. The fire triggered by the Lao Liberation Army artillery the night before at the enemy installations at the Ban Dong crossroads was still blazing.

The enemy, after taking stinging blows on the other parts of Southern Laos, had regrouped into four clusters at Ban Dong named respectively One, Two, Three and Four. Their force comprised the First Paratroop Brigade, the First "Task Force" Armour Brigade and the remnants of Third Paratroop Brigade. Their firepower consisted of three artillery sites including twenty-four 105mm and 150mm pieces.

8.00 a.m. The sky brightened up. Visibility improved markedly as the mist dissipated. From a long distance, the movement of the Liberation Army could be seen with naked eyes. Under the effective protection of artillery and anti-aircraft units the shock infantrymen stormed up the enemy centre in the wake of tanks.

The 17th Armour Regiment and the 8th Paratroop Battalion of the Saigon troops were attacked. It was 8.20 a.m.

By 10.30 a.m. all the enemy defence lines had been broken. The 17th Armour Regiment was slashed into two colums, one fleeing in the direction of Kaki bridge. One jeep, apparently of the enemy command, forced its way amidst the fleeing tanks in an attempt to come to the fore. It was hit in full force by a tank driving from the flanks, rolled on itself and became a crumpled mass. The tank, continuing its hellish drive, struck a personnel carrier which was tossed across a bomb crater and fell into river.

In the Eastern flank, a unit of the Lao Liberation Forces with the support of tanks made a flank attack on the enemy, wiping out 500 troops and destroying 14 vehicles.

In the Northeastern prong, a units of the Liberation Army took up position on a vantage ground to provide cover for the friendly units to continue its triumphal push in pursuit of the enemy fleeing on Highway 9.

From the West and the North, the Liberation Army closed in on the enemy 17th Armour Regiment like a pair of pincers. From armoured trucks, the liberation fighters jumped to the ground and cut the enemy into ribbons, destroying fifty vehicles and capturing twenty others. A group of liberation fighters, after capturing a tank, drove it out of the parking ground and turned the guns mounted on it against enemy aircraft, shooting drown three helicopters in a few minutes.

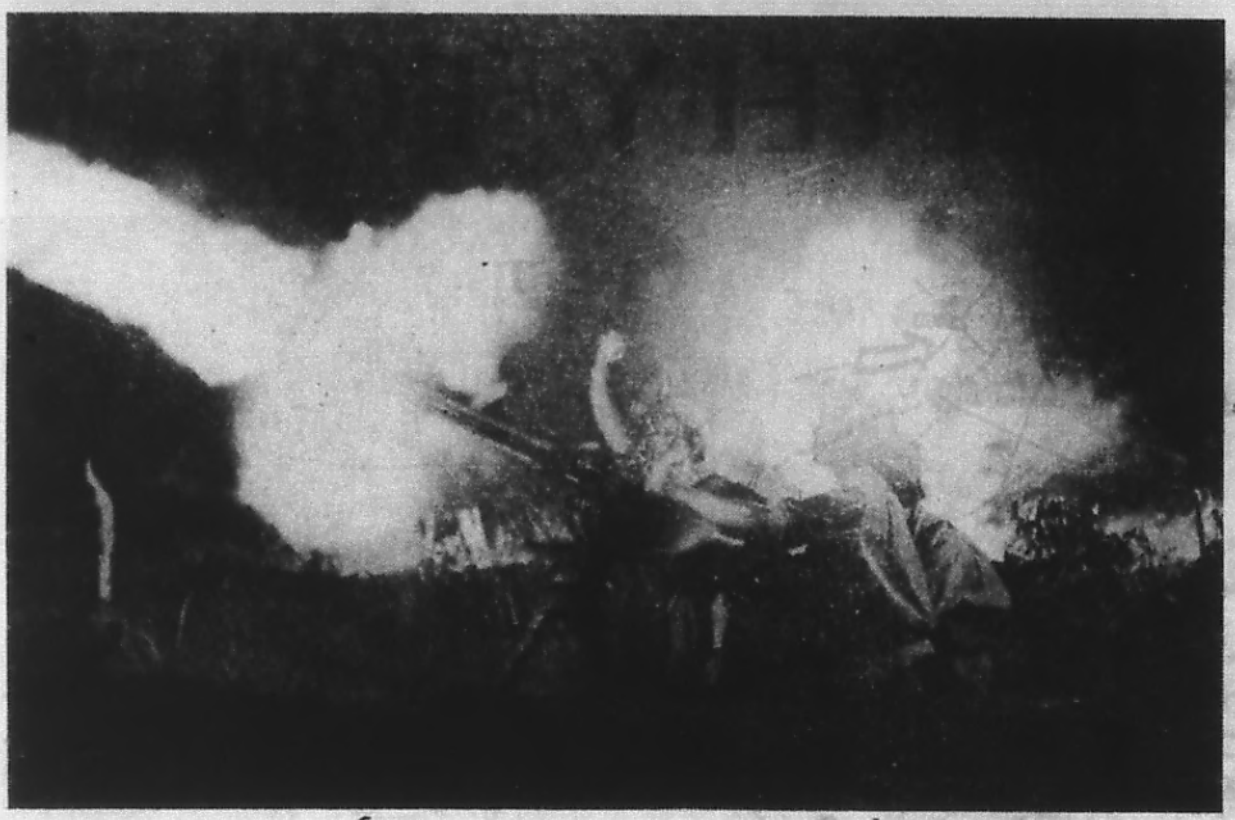
Meanwhile, tank and infantry units of the Lao PLA took on the enemy at Kaki bridge, blocking their way of retreat and inflicting heavy casualties.

As the day wore on, two helicopters circled over the battlefield in search of the battered troops. A group of liberation fighters devised a ruse and lured the enemy aircraft into their trap. As soon as they touched down the pilots discovered at great dismay that they had been cheated into death. They hurriedly left their engines and ran for their life, leaving their two helicopters intact to the liberation army.

At 4 p.m. all the assailing columns of the PLAF converged on the centre of Ban Dong. The whole enemy base defended by 5,000 troops and hundreds of aircraft, tanks and artillery pieces, had been blotted.

In the spring sun, along the limpid Tchepone River, the heroic liberation fighters dashed forward in hot pursuit of the enemy, admist thunderous cheers of the Ban Dong people.

ON HILL 935, NORTHERN QUANG TRI FRONT



South Viet Nam PLAF fighters pouring their fire into US positions.

OPERATION "LAM SON 719"...

(*Continued from page 6*)

We have defeated the main tactical moves of the enemy: heliborne, armour-spearheaded, hilltop dug in, leap-frogging, and intense artillery barrage in support of infantry.

We have successfully defended the liberated zone, Tchepone town, the lives and property of the people, our bases and storages, and kept communications and transport going without a hitch.

THE big victories of our armed forces and people and those of the South Viet Nam armed forces and people on the heroic Highway 9 battlefield in defeating the operation "Dewey Canyon 2" (later dubbed "Lam Son 719") of the US and Saigon puppets in their invasion of Southern Laos, and the big victories in defeating the operation "Total Victory 1-71" of the US and Saigon puppets in their invasion of North-eastern Cambodia, are of very great strategic significance and of special political and military importance.

Those victories constitute a stunning blow at the US imperialists' perfidious scheme to prolong and expand their war of aggression in Indochina and at their scheme to "make Indochinese fight Indochinese" and at their "Vietnamization of the war" plan, and a heavy blow at the reactionary doctrine of Nixon and Company.

They are a very hard blow dealt at the US and Saigon puppets' aggressive will, making the already sinking morale of both the US and its lackeys sink even more quickly.

This victory testifies to the abundant strength and leaping maturity of our army in the matter of courage, intelligence, resourcefulness, and combat skills.

It rejoices and strongly stimulates our army and people, the armies and peoples of the fraternal countries on the Indochinese peninsula, and gladdens our friends all over the world. It is having a great influence on the situation of the war on the battlefronts of the Indochinese countries, helping the war of resistance of the Lao, Vietnamese and Khmer peoples against US aggression and for national salvation develop in their favour, and opening splendid vistas before them.

This victory will have great impact on the political situation of the US, subjecting the policy of the bellicose Nixon clique to stronger and stronger protests by the American people, sharpening their contradictions and turning the difficulties now confronting the US imperialists into a still greater predicament, powerfully stimulating the movement of the American people and the world's peoples in support of the just struggle of the peoples of the three Indochinese countries.

THE very big victory in Southern Laos is a brilliant victory of our most correct and imaginative political and military line, of our talented strategic and operational leadership, and of our superior military art. We have accurately materialized our strategic and operational plans, ready to engage in combat, resolved to stop the enemy short at Ban Dong, foiling their scheme to enter Tchepone town, wiping them out column after column, and finally, overrunning the main cluster of enemy positions in Ban Dong, completely defeating their military adventure.

This resounding victory is a glorious victory of ardent patriotism, of deep hatred for the aggressors and the traitors, of our determination to endure sacrifices and make the greatest contributions to the independence and freedom of the Fatherland, and to fulfil our noble internationalist duty. It is a brilliant illustration of the tradition of heroic and indomitable struggle of our people and of the revolutionary heroism of our army and people.

This historic victory is a splendid victory of the invincible strength of a militant solidarity as solid as the majestic Truong Son (the Indochinese Cordillera-*Ed*) and of the warm fraternal friendship as abundant as the Mekong River between the peoples of the three Indochinese countries. This is a combat coordination of all the fronts in Laos, a harmonious and fruitful coordination of the Vietnamese army and people on the Khe Sanh front who have dealt stringing blows at the enemy's soft spots in the rear of this aggressive operation, inflicting heavy losses on and sowing confusion among the enemy ranks. This is a combat coordination of the fraternal armies and peoples of Viet Nam and Cambodia on their battlefronts, who have dealt sledge-hammer blows at the enemy, and driven them into ever tighter straits.

On this occasion, our army and people express sincere thanks to the gallant Vietnamese army and people and the heroic Khmer army and people, our friends who are standing in the same combat trench to fight US aggression, for national salvation.

This victory is a victory of the wholehearted and very effective support and strong stimulation given no by the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the big rear area, the solid base of the resistance war of the three peoples on the Indochinese peninsula. It is also possible thanks to the very precious assistance, sympathy and support of the socialist countries and the peace-and justice-loving people all over the world.

On this occasion, our army and people express our profound gratitude for that wholehearted and most loyal support.

In this showdown battle between us and the US-Saigon puppets, although the latter had mobilized to a high degree the "potential" and "absolute superiority" of their weapons, techniques and war means, our army has shown its marvellous valour, resourcefulness and manœuvrability and its capacity to endure hardships and overcome difficulties.

All units and services, from infantry, armour, artillery and anti-aircraft, to transport, engineering and signal, from crack units, main forces as well as regional forces, have fought well, and won brisk and resounding victories.

The more they fight, the stronger and the fitter our armed forces become, materially and morally. They far outdid the enemy not only in fighting morale but also in combat skills. They have made leaping bounds in the combat coordination between many services with fairly high combat efficiency, have proved capable of destroying big enemy units from battalions to regiments or brigades at a time. Once, they wiped out 2 enemy brigades in a single battle.

The front-service units have grown up by leaping bounds, meeting in time and fully all demands of a big campaign unfolding on a large theatre under fierce fighting conditions.

All units, services and prongs have closely united and well coordinated their fight, and displayed a very high sense of organization and discipline, and-mindedness between commanders and fighters.

The High Command warmly congratulates and commends all units, services and all officers and men who have contributed to the glorious victories in this historic campaign. It warmly congratulates the local people of all nationalities for wholeheartely supporting and coordinating with the armed forces to defeat the enemy.

THE US and Saigon puppets' military adventures in Southern Laos has been ignominously defeated. However, extremely stubborn and bellicose by nature, the US imperialists and their flunkeys have not yet given up their aggressive design against our country and other countries in Indochina. In their critical situation, they will carry out new and more barbarous and cunning war schemes and acts in an attempt to stave off their unavoidable complete defeat.

Therefore our armed forces and people must keep high vigilance, unite millions as one, and forge ahead victoriously, attacking the enemy on all the battlefields and fighting staunchly and persistently till complete victory. Our people are resolved to stand shoulder to shoulder with the fraternal Vietnamese and Khmer peoples to drive the US imperialists from the Indochinese peninsula, to wrest back independence, freedom and territorial integrity for their Fatherland.

We tell Nixon and his entourage that so long as they drag on and expand their aggressive war they will incur heavier and more ignominious defeats. Sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.

An heroic nation, like ours, with its glorious history of fighting against foreign aggression, will certainly win, and defeat all brutal enemies.

Let our entire army and people march forward heroically!

The Lao, Vietnamese and Khmer peoples will triumph!

The US imperialists will surely be defeated!

Sam Neua, March 23, 1971

THE LAO PLA HIGH COMMAND

CHINA'S NEW SPACE EXPLOIT

A 221-kilo satellite for scientific experiments in outer space successfully launched by the People's Republic of China on March 4, 1971.

While in orbit it transmitted to the earth full data on differing scientific experiments. Thus, within less than two years (April 4, 1970 to March 3, 1971) China twice launched successfully these man-made earth satellites.

This is a significant step in spatial conquest. The South Vietnamese people and scientifics warmly hail this new and great achievement.

From the trenches of their all-out fight against US aggression, the South Vietnamese people felt very elated at, and proud of, this new exploit of the fraternal Chinese people and regard it as a great encouragement to their struggle.

May the Chinese people, working class and scientists and other people under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party headed by respected and beloved Chairman Mao Tsetung record greater achievements in the development of science and technology as well as in building China into a prosperous and powerful socialist country, thus contributing notably to the safeguard of peace in Asia and the world!

GREETINGS
to heroic Mongolian People's Army

ON the 50th founding anniversary of the Mongolian People's Army (March 18, 1971), Giai Phong Press Agency released an editorial with warm congratulations.

After recalling the process of the birth and growth of the Mongolian People's Army, the editorial said:

"During World War Two, the Mongolian People's Army on the one hand dauntlessly fought for the defence of the Fatherland's independence and security, and on the other joined efforts with the Soviet army in defeating the Japanese fascists, thus playing a worthy part with the world peoples in bringing to an end World War Two and saving mankind from German-Italian-Japanese fascism.

"The Mongolian People's Army now is continuing its exertions to raise its combat efficiency and its strength," the editorial went on, "and is ready to defend the fruits of the creative labour of the Mongolian people.

The South Vietnamese people and People's Liberation Armed Forces greatly rejoice at the brilliant achievements of the Mongolian people in general in socialist construction and of the Mongolian People's Army in particular in the building and defence of the Fatherland which represents a great contribution to the safeguarding of peace and security in Asia and the world over."

The GPA editorial voiced the South Vietnamese army and people's gratitude for the support of the Mongolian Party, Government, people and congratulated the Mongolian people and army on their great successes in national defence and the building of a prosperous Mongolia, and expressed the wish that the friendship and militant solidarity between Viet Nam and Mongolia would grow with every passing day.

"SOLIDARITY WITH THE INDOCHINESE PEOPLES" WEEK

A MEETING opening a "*Solidarity with Viet Nam*" drive was held in *Moscow* on March 16 with the participation of representatives of many Soviet mass organizations. It passed a resolution flaying war crimes of the US and its lackeys, and voicing support to the fight of the Indochinese peoples until complete victory. In conclusion, the resolution said: "The deeds of the American imperialists in Indochina cannot be let pass with impunity. They will not shake the will and courage of the Vietnamese, Lao and Cambodian peoples who enjoy the staunch support of the Soviet Union, the other socialist countries and all progressive mankind."

+ In a rally in *Peking* on the Vietnamese people's anti-US nationwide Resistance Day (March 19) Mr. Chiu Hui-tso, Politbureau member of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, Deputy-Chief of the General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, said: "The Chinese people will discharge their international obligations and bend all their energies to helping the Vietnamese and Indochinese peoples drive all American aggressors out of Indochina."

+ In *Cuba* March 19 has been chosen as a national day to boost production and achieve the most outstanding successes in all fields. The *Laos and Cambodia Cuba — Viet Nam Committee* called on all Cubans to show solidarity with the Vietnamese people with concrete actions. Meetings to mark the historic day of March 19 took place in many factories and schools in Havana and in the provinces.

+ In the *German Democratic Republic*, commemorations of the same occasion in Dresden, Varel, Mechlenburg and other towns and cities were attended by high-ranking government officials.

Speaking in Dresden, Mr Max Zeffrin, Vice-Premier, Health Minister and Chairman of the Solidarity with Viet Nam Committee, stated: "The recent war crimes of the American imperialists in Indochina once again have exposed the cynical cruelty of the Nixon administration, challenged the independence and sovereignty of the Indochinese countries and international accords."

+ On March 12, the *Communist Youth Central Committee of Hungary* held at Szekesfehervar a meeting of solidarity with the youth and peoples of Viet Nam and Indochina as a whole. Mr Istvan Horvath, member of the Hungarian Communist Party Central Committee and First Secretary of the Communist Youth Central Committee, appealed to his country's youth for stronger solidarity with the youth and people of Viet Nam and, as the immediate target, for the donation of a school for Viet Nam.

+ On March 4 and 12, young people and students in *Warsaw* and *Nysa, Poland*, gathered to condemn US aggressive war in Viet Nam in solidarity with the Vietnamese people.

Those present called on the youths and peoples of other countries to demand that the US government end its aggression in Viet Nam and respect the Vietnamese people's right to self-determination. Students of School No 11, Warsaw, decided to put in 500 days' overtime in a fund-raising drive to help Viet Nam.

+ 200 *Swedes* demonstrated in front of the United States Cultural Centre in *Stockholm* in protest against American aggression in Indochina. They distributed leaflets denouncing the crimes of US imperialism, and hurled addled eggs at the American Ambassador coming to deliver a speech there.

+ The *Finland - Viet Nam Committee*, including representatives of all major political parties — the Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Central Party, etc.— issued an appeal to the world's peoples to timely check US aggression in Indochina. The declaration was put out at the Committee's founding ceremony.

+ On March 12, 600 members of the *Luxemburg - Viet Nam Committee*, passed a resolution condemning US expansion of the war in Indochina, and affirmed its backing to, and solidarity with, the Vietnamese people.

+ On March 9, the *British People's Movement for Peace in Viet Nam* put out a declaration calling for a march from London to Paris on May 20. The declaration demanded that the US government publish a dateline for the withdrawal of American troops from Viet Nam and Indochina.

+ Following an appeal by the *International Federation of Women for Peace and Independence in New York*, thousands of letters were sent to the White House from various parts of the US and abroad. The senders called for the pull-out of all American troops from Indochina before June 30 this year at the latest.

+ The *Senate of Minnesota* state has recently passed a bill disapproving the undeclared war in Viet Nam carried on by the Federal government. The State Attorney General will request the Federal Supreme Court to re-examine the right of the United States President to send young Americans to fight in the undeclared war in Viet Nam.

+ On March 16, 20 *priests* marched from Massachusetts to Washington, for an end to the Viet Nam war and the withdrawal of American troops by the end of 1971 at the latest.

+ 200 *Americans* demonstrated at the naval base of Newport while Nixon was delivering a speech to the officers there.

+ On March 13, *the famous singer and movie star Jane Fonda and her colleagues* performed a programme designed against the Viet Nam war in the very streets of Fort Bruss, a naval base of North Carolina.

RSVN DELEGATION
visits Rumania

AT the invitation of the Government of the Rumanian Socialist Republic, a delegation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam led by its Foreign Minister, Nguyen Thi Binh, paid to that country a friendship visit from March 11 to 16, 1971.

The delegation was warmly welcomed by Ilie Verdet, member of the Executive Committee and Standing Presidium of the Rumanian Communist Party Central Committee and First Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers; Cornerliu Manescu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and many other leading officials of the Foreign Ministry and representatives of mass organizations of the RSR. The diplomatic corps accredited to Bucharest and the Ambassadors of the RSVN and DRVN were also present at the airport.

During its stay in Rumania, the Delegation called on President of the Council of State of the RSR N. Ceausescu and Chairman of the Council of Ministers Ion Gheorghe Maurer, and had a cordial talk with the delegation of the Rumanian Government, and took part in the meeting organized by the Bucharest People's Council.

In his meeting with the RSVN Delegation, Mr N. Ceausescu expressed the deep concern of the Communist Party and Government of Rumania with the present situation in Indochina and their condemnation of the US imperialists' intensification and expansion of the war there. The President praised the Vietnamese and Indochinese peoples' great victories and reiterated full support from the Communist Party, the Government and people of Rumania to the Vietnamese and Indochinese peoples' anti-US struggle.

A joint communiqué was issued during the talks between the RSVN Delegation and the Rumanian Government Delegation.

It said:

"The Rumanian Government and people reaffirm their full solidarity and total support to the just struggle of the Vietnamese people and the other Indochinese peoples for their sacred national rights, and express firm belief in the triumph of their cause. Rumania has given and will continue to give the Vietnamese people support and assistance in all spheres till final victory."

After strongly condemning the US imperialists' extension of their war of aggression in Indochina, the joint communiqué pointed out:

"All these grave acts constitute a flagrant violation and total contempt of the principles of the Indochinese peoples' sovereignty and national independence which are recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Indochina and the 1962 Geneva Agreement on Laos, thus posing a grave menace to peace in Southeast Asia and the rest of the world.

The Government of the Rumanian Socialist Republic declares wholehearted support to the 10-point overall solution and the 8-point initiative of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam which provide a reasonable and equitable basis for a political settlement of the Viet Nam issue.

Considering the 'Vietnamization of the war' policy of the US government as a prolongation and dangerous expansion of the aggressive war and a gross violation of the South Vietnamese people's national rights, the two sides demand an end to this policy, the total, speedy and unconditional withdrawal of the US troops and those of their allies from South Viet Nam, and the establishment of a broadly representative provisional coalition government with a view to the holding of free general elections in South Viet Nam."

ONE YEAR OF VICTORIOUS STRUGGLE BY THE KHMER

KAMPUCHEA NATIONAL UNITED FRONT'S POLITICAL BUREAU *reviews the situation in the country*

THE Central Committee members of the National United Front of Kampuchea in charge of international affairs on March 15 and 16 held a conference under the chairmanship of Samdech Penn Nouth, Chairman of the Political Bureau of the NUFK to review the national and international situation of Cambodia since the March 18, 1970 reactionary coup d'état and the April 30, 1970 aggression of the US imperialists and their Saigon stooges, *AKI* reported.

The conference approved the financial policy of the Royal Government of the National Union of Cambodia, and in agreement with those responsible for home affairs, decided to take March 23 as the NUFK founding anniversary day.

A press communiqué on the conference was published on March 19, reading:

After 12 months of the people's war of resistance waged with determination and nation-wide solidarity under the banner of the NUFK headed by Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State, the Khmer people and the Cambodian National People's Liberation Armed Forces, recorded dramatic gains in all fields and drove the Nixon administration and its Saigon and Phnom Penh quislings into a complete stalemate.

Thanks to a sound political line and directive, the strict implementation of the NUFK Political Program helped realize the broadest and steadiest unity among the social classes and people of all walks of life, and the patriotic personalities and conduct a resolute and victorious armed resistance war against the US aggressors and their lackeys.

The Cambodian NLAF, taking the initiative and successfully attacking the enemy without respite on all battlefields, have enlisted staunch and resolute support from the politically conscious masses of the population.

In the liberated areas, the communiqué went on, has been shaping a harmonious and healthy life imbued with genuine and noble patriotism, enthusiasm and legitimate national pride, a life in freedom and democracy, suitable to a new, unified, independent, neutral, democratic and prosperous Cambodia.

The recent exodus of intellectuals, students, personalities, functionaries... to the liberated areas with their families has shown more than ever that the NUFK is the only right path for the Khmer patriots to wrest back independence, neutrality, peace, sovereignty and territorial integrity for Cambodia.

All these achievements inside the country, the communiqué said, have helped raise the prestige of the NUFK and RGNUC in the international arena, and strengthen the militant support and assistance from all the revolutionary, progressive and peace-, justice- and freedom-loving people in the world.

All the NUFK members in charge of international affairs, the communiqué concluded, were determined to further develop and consolidate the monolithic solidarity under the banner of the NUFK headed by Samdech Head of State Norodom Sihanouk and of the RGNUK with Samdech Penn Nouth and Khieu Samphan as respectively Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. They were also resolved to further promote the militant relations with the DRVN, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam and the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, the Lao Patriotic Front, the Vietnamese and Lao peoples, in conformity with the joint declaration of the Summit Conference of the Indochinese People, and further strengthen the relations with the revolutionary, progressive and peace-, justice- and freedom-loving people and countries such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, especially the Chinese people and the People's Republic of China.

Triumphant return to the village
Photo by *AKI*

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE KHMER PEOPLE

A — IN MILITARY FIELD

I. **168,000** *enemy troops killed, captured or put out of action*, including:

— **56,000** Saigon puppet troops (15,000 of them taken prisoner)

— **12,000** American troops and others.

II. *Units wiped out or heavily damaged:*

— **8** Brigade tactical groups

— Several Command and Division units

— **158** battalions or battalion-sized cantonment groups (including 110 Lon Nol battalions)

— **275** companies and several groups in **54** battalions (including 32 companies completely decimated and 10 battalions wiped out)

— **15** armour squadrons

— **3** regional military sectors

— Nearly **80** military posts.

III. *War materials seized:*

— **32,000** firearms of various types

— **550** tons of ammunition

— **15** tons of medicines

— **1,500** tons of rice

— **270** trucks and many motorboats and barges

— Hundreds of radio sets (receivers and transmitters)

— 120 tons of military uniforms.

IV. *War materials destroyed:*

— **3,000** firearms of various kinds

— **500** cannons

— **850** aircraft downed or wrecked on the ground (including **32,000** tanks and armoured cars)

— **230** river craft, motor launches and barges (including 160 of Lon Nol)

— **130** ammo depots, gasoline storages and other military workshops

— All communication lines cut off.

B — IN THE LIBERATED ZONE

— **7/10** of the territory, involving more than 4 million inhabitants, liberated (out of the total population of 7 million)

— **5** provinces completely liberated: Kratié, Mondulkiri, Stungtreng, Rattanakiri, Preah Vihea

— **10** provinces liberated by 80 to 90 per cent: Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Kompong Cham, Kompong Thom, Siem Reap, Takeo, Kampot, Kandal, Kompong Chhnang, Ouder Mean Chey.

— **4** provinces liberated by 40 to 50 per cent: Kompong Speu, Battambang, Pursat, KohKong. All told:

— **751** among 1,129 Khums liberated.

C — IN DIPLOMATIC FIELD

— **22** Governments and 2 National Liberation Movements have recognized the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia

— The **NUFK** and **RGNUC** have won wide support from many Governments, International Organizations, Communist and Workers' Parties, and mass organizations, including the American progressives.

PEOPLE UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NUFK

WARM GREETINGS TO THE NUFK AND THE HEROIC KHMER PEOPLE

A year ago, in the last days of March 1970 in the throes of a revolutionary upsurge in the country of ancient Angkor temples, the National United Front of Kampuchea, headed by Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, was founded. In his capacity as legal Head of State of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Samdech Norodom Sihanouk launched a vibrant appeal to the Khmer people to closely unite within the NUFK and resolutely fight against the US imperialists and the Lon Nol - Sirik Matak junta, liberate the country and safeguard Cambodia's independence, sovereignty, neutrality and territorial integrity.

Ever since, new glorious pages have been written by the Khmer people in their history. The NUFK Political Program has outlined the sensible objectives of struggle and home and foreign policies aimed at realizing nation-wide solidarity against the aggressive designs and activities of the US imperialists, overthrow the dictatorship of their servants headed by the Lon Nol - Sirik Matak junta, defend the national independence, peace, neutrality, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country within the present borders, build a free and democratic people's regime, and eventually a prosperous Cambodia in furtherance of the Khmer people's profound aspirations.

The Political Program emphasized the Cambodian people's determination to strengthen the militant friendship and solidarity with the peoples of the Indochinese countries against the common enemy — the US aggressors — till complete victory.

THE NUFK Political Program has accomplished tremendous achievements and Samdech Norodom Sihanouk's appeal for national salvation has been warmly responded to, which represents great and comprehensive gains for the Khmer and bitter setbacks for the US and its Phnom Penh puppets.

To make good his reverses and carry out his "doctrine," Nixon threw nearly 100,000 American and Saigon troops into an invasion of Cambodia, and Saigon and Thai soldiers into repeated aggressive operations with US air and artillery support, and perpetrated countless crimes against the Khmer people and Vietnamese residents in Cambodia. Such a move was termed by Nixon as an attack on the Communists' sanctuary to help "Vietnamization."

But by extending its aggressive war to Cambodia, the Nixon administration not only has not been able to stave off failures in its "Vietnamization" in South Viet Nam, but also has been sustaining ever heavier setbacks and bogged down ever more deeply as a result of the Cambodians' grim resistance. Under the NUFK glorious banner for national salvation, the Khmer people's war of resistance has been rapidly expanding and growing up in all fields. Following the emergence of the NUFK with Samdech Head of State Norodom Sihanouk as Chairman, the formation of the Royal Government of National Union with Samdech Penn Nouth and Khieu Samphan as respectively Prime Minister and Deputy-Prime Minister, and the founding of the National People's Liberation Armed Forces constituted important and very fundamental successes which brought the Khmer people steadily closer to final victory.

Courage and sound leadership have helped the Cambodian people liberate 70% of the territory with more than 4 million inhabitants, recover completely 5 provinces and mostly 6 others. Committees of the NUFK and people's administration of various levels have been set up all over in the liberated zone, thus gradually expanding the people's power to the areas still under the enemy control. The glowing righteous political lines of the NUFK has won over a large number of prominent personalities, intellectuals, high-ranking officials and patriotic army officers from the Lon Nol - Sirik Matak administration to the resistance.

In carrying out the correct and creative military lines of the NUFK, the people's war has continually held the initiative against the enemy on all battlefields. The three armed categories have been established, tempered through the fighting and grown up quickly. With an ardent patriotism, deep hatred for the enemy, and extraordinary bravery and resourcefulness the Cambodian National People's Liberation Armed Forces have been fighting with increasing success.

Along with big political and military advances and with the NUFK's judicious foreign policy, the Cambodian people's just struggle has enlisted ever stronger approval and support from the peace- and justice-loving people the world over, including the American people. In only a short period, 26 countries and national liberation movements officially recognized the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia. The accomplishments in foreign relations, especially those recorded at the Conference of Non-aligned Countries in Lusaka in September 1970, have further raised the international status of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia.

THUS the US scheme to use Cambodia as a testing ground for the "Nixon doctrine" has been foiled, by the sensible Political Program of the NUFK headed by Samdech Sihanouk, the solidarity and stiff resistance of the Cambodian people and by the great friendship and militant solidarity of the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Lao peoples have been upholding the spirit of the Joint Statement of the Summit Conference of the Indochinese Peoples.

It is with great joy that the South Vietnamese greet these splendid successes of the brother Cambodian people, as a vigorous incentive to our own fight against US aggression for national salvation. We are sincerely grateful for their support to our own cause. As a close neighbour to Cambodia, the South Vietnamese, under the leadership of the National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, pledge staunch allegiance to the Joint Statement of the Summit Conference of the Indochinese Peoples, determination to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Khmer people, and mutual support and assistance till complete victory.

MAJOR VICTORIES OF THE CAMBODIAN NLAF

1 — The nearly 100,000-strong invasion by the US and Saigon puppet troops defeated:

From April 30 to June 30, 1970, the CNLAF put out of action 30,000 enemy troops, including 12,000 Americans, shot down 400 aircraft, wrecked 2,400 military vehicles, mostly tanks and armoured cars, destroyed hundreds of artillery pieces and heavy mortars, and seized large quantities of weapons and other military equipment.

2— 2 multi-battalion combat groups (numbers 318 and 333) of the Saigon puppets in Chup, Peam Cheng and Krek areas badly mauled:

From June 25 to July 28, 1970, the CNLAF put out of combat 3,800 Saigon puppet troops including 7 infantry battalions, 7 infantry companies and 6 armoured squadrons wiped out or decimated. They destroyed 430 military vehicles, two-thirds of them tanks and armoured cars, wrecked 20 cannons and brought down 4 war planes.

3 — Big victories in Kirirom area:

From July 11 to 27, 1970, the CNLAF twice intercepted the enemy reinforcements. They put out of action 4,000 officers and men of the Lon Nol Army including 9 battalions wiped out or decimated, captured more than 1,500 firearms and nearly 100 tons of ammunition and war materials, captured and wrecked hundreds of military vehicles, 12 cannons and 3 weapon storages.

4 — 7 Lon Nol battalions in Skoun area badly trounced:

From July 31 to August 7, 1970, the CNLAF put out of action hundreds of enemy troops, took many prisoners, and seized or destroyed many weapons.

5 — The "Chen La" operation conducted from September 7 to December 30, 1970 by 52 Lon Nol battalions along Highway 6 and 7 defeated:

The CNLAF put out of combat more than 9,000 enemy troops including 5 battalions and 3 companies neatly wiped out, decimated 12 battalions and 4 companies including one battalion and one company of Saigon puppets, shot down nearly 30 aircraft, sank 34 war vessels and combat launches, and wrecked 30 military vehicles. The Cambodian Liberation Forces also captured 1,500 firearms, 11 military vehicles and 34 tons of ammunition.

6 — The "Total Victory" operation conducted by more than 6,000 Saigon puppet troops in Memot and Snoul areas, foiled:

From October 26 to November 8, 1970, the CNLAF wiped out over 1,700 Saigon troops, destroyed 130 military vehicles including more than 100 tanks and armoured cars.

7 — Big victories on Highway 4 (Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville):

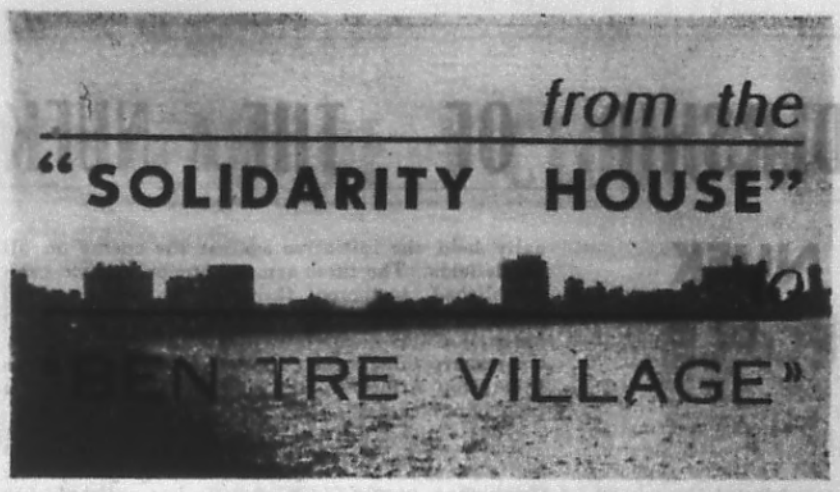
From November 20, 1970 to February 10, 1971, the CNLAF put out of combat more than 9,500 enemy troops, including many company and field officers, wiped out 11 infantry battalions and 9 infantry companies, 1 armoured squadron, including 1 battalion and 1 infantry company and 1 armoured squadron of the Saigon puppets, decimated 13 infantry battalion, multi-battalion HQ and 1 armoured squadron, shot down 22 aircraft, wrecked 323 military vehicles, including 39 armoured cars, and destroyed 5 artillery pieces. They also captured over 1,500 guns of various kinds, nearly 200 tons of ammunition and food supplies, 77 military trucks and 20 combat launches.

8 — "Total Victory 1-71" operation conducted by 5 multi-battalion units and 3 armoured regiments of the Saigon puppets in Damber, Chup (Kompong Cham) and Snoul (Kratie) areas, defeated:

From February 4 to March 3, 1971, the CNLAF wiped out more than 8,000 enemy troops, badly mauled 4 Saigon multi-battalion units, including 5 infantry battalions and 3 armoured squadrons wiped out, 13 infantry battalions and 8 armoured squadrons decimated, wrecked more than 950 military vehicles, including 500 tanks and armoured cars, shot down 50 aircraft, destroyed or damaged nearly 100 artillery pieces and hundreds of other weapons.

A young fighter of the CNLAF Ready to defend Cambodia.

from the "SOLIDARITY HOUSE" of "BEN TRE VILLAGE"



A Cuban folk song goes as follows:

Tour the world
To find a place where the sky's as beautiful as here,
Where the moon's as resplendent
And sugar cane as sweet
As here

Elsewhere in the world
Where another Fidel is,
He who rouses mountains and forests.
A flag with five stripes and a star,
That is Cuba, beautiful Cuba
Whose defender I love most.

We landed on Cuban territory in the small hours of the last day of 1970. Old friends of ours were waiting for us at the airport: Ernesto Vera, President of the Cuban Journalists' Association, Jorge Enrique Mendoza and Marta Roja, respectively editor-in-chief and correspondent of the paper *Granma*, and others. Of course, this time we met other Cubans among whom Siria Scull, the serious and resourceful guide and interpreter of our delegation.

We did not yet see Melba, Chairman of the Committee of Solidarity with Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos, and a great friend of the Vietnamese and Indochinese peoples. Neither did we see Aida, a member of the Committee and a close friend of mine, with whom I had been acquainted during my visit to this Island of Freedom five years ago. Both Melba and Aida had come to the airport at 5 p. m. the day before, but we were seven hours ahead of schedule. Compelled by bad weather conditions to land at Bermudas, we were not allowed to take off by the American authorities of the military base for lack, they said, of clearance from the United States Government. So we had to wait for three straight hours, with neither food nor drinking water.

"It's awful!" commented an American journalist.

"It must be a Nixon trick. But sooner or later we'll leave here," we replied.

At 9 a. m. the same day we got a ring from Melba. She inquired about Ly Van Sau, myself and the other comrades of our delegation, about our program and many other things. Her solicitude touched us all.

While at the RSVN Embassy, someone called us on the phone at 3 p. m. Melba wanted to see us right away. We prepared some Vietnamese tea for her.

And here she came. She remained as youthful and lively and agile as ever. She hugged each of us.

"No protocol here, no ceremony between Vietnamese and Cubans, is it?" she said, looking at Ambassador Nguyen Minh Phuong.

She was all joy, talking lively but visibly moved. She blinked all the time, and now and then ran her handkerchief on her red eyes. She asked Ly Van Sau about Minister Nguyen Thi Binh then in Paris, and me about Chairmen Nguyen Huu Tho and Huynh Tan Phat, Minister Tran Buu Kiem, Vice Minister Hoang Bich Son, Vo Dong Giang and others in the liberated zone.

Melba listening to the poem "To Cuba" published by "South Viet Nam in Struggle"

Melba was very moved by Madame Nguyen Thi Binh's letter we brought her. She could not refrain her tears as she listened to the translation of a poem dedicated to Cuba by Nguyen Ba in the December 20, 1970 special issue of *South Viet Nam in Struggle*.

Melba entertained most particular feelings for Viet Nam, for South Viet Nam. This is what she had told me five years earlier:

"My mother once asked me in my childhood: 'How do you love daddy and mummy?' I answered: 'My love for daddy expands beyond the end of the sky, and my love for you, mummy, beyond the end of the sea.' Now if anyone asked me how I love Viet Nam I would give the same answer."

Melba's deep, infinite feelings for Viet Nam are also Cuba's feelings. They find a concrete expression in this splendid and heroic land in multifarious actions for Viet Nam's victory, for the consolidation of friendship between the two fratefnal peoples.

A Peruvian asked me for a badge: "It will be a valuable souvenir and you Vietnamese alone have it."

That is a token of solidarity between Cuba and Viet Nam—Cambodia — Laos, bearing an S. the initial of the word "Solidaridad" and the shape of the Indochinese peninsula.

Melba had pinned a specimen of the said badge on the breast of each of us when we visited the committee of which she was the chairman. Very proud of her work, she called the beautiful building serving as the premises of the committee "Solidarity House." The local had to be repaired and enlarged when the Committee of Solidarity with South Viet Nam was renamed Committee for Solidarity with Viet Nam. The CSSVN was one of the first organizations in the world set up in the wake of the universal movement to support Viet Nam against American aggression. Its eighth founding anniversary was lately commemorated with a very substantial balance-sheet of activities carried out all over the first truly free country in America, a bastion against US imperialism no more than 90 miles from Florida.

In the evening the Solidarity House was flooded with light. A large crowd—members of the Committee and subcommittees, cameramen, journalists and representatives of various organizations—attended the affair. Melba welcomed us on the veranda.

The climate was that of a family gathering, of a meeting of brothers and sisters. There was no etiquette. Apart from the two Vietnamese delegations, there were the delegations of Lao and Cambodian journalists who were visiting Cuba and the Solidarity House for the first time. In spite of this, our friends felt quite at home. Xon, Deputy Director of *Pathet Lao* Radio, extended Prince Souphanouvong's greetings to his hosts, and recounted scenes of fighting and people's everyday life in Samneua and the Plain of Jars. Thioun Mumm, FUNK Politbureau member and GRUNK Minister of Economy, thanked the Cuban people for the imaginative manifestations of their feelings toward the revolution of the Cambodian people led by the National United Front and its Chairman, Samdech Norodom Sihanouk.

Melba enjoyed the evening, so did everyone. We had dinner together in an easy, warm atmosphere. Like the head of a family, she saw to it that the food served suited everyone's taste. The only inconvenience was the smallness of the Solidarity House.

"Solidarity has been expanded to the Lao and Cambodian peoples," she said. "The Solidarity House too should be enlarged."

IT is no accident that Viet Nam and Cuba are so close to each other. Looking at the landscape through the aeroplane window, I felt as though I was flying over my own country. Cuban "palmas" with their spreading foliage looked like the coconut-trees of my village. Extensive sugar plantations and meadows with oxen grazing here and there and dams and the blue sky with cotton-white clouds resembled those in Viet Nam. When I stood at the seaside I had the impression to be on the shore of my native province—Ben Tre. And after touring six provinces—about a thousand kilometers—I detected more common features. Cuba's countryside with pretty leaf-roofed houses surrounded by gardens and guava, mango, ananas and banana orchards did not look different from Ben Tre, or Chac Bang and Can Gao in Western Nam Bo. How astonished I was when I came to Guamá: Tresoro Lake famous for its crocodiles reminded me of shrimp-teeming Thi Tuong lake in Bac Lieu province. Here I found similar green trees on the bank, similar fishing scenes, similar white storks flying about in the sky; and the same gum-trees, the same pointed-blade grass, the same *rau ma* with coin-like leaves, the same brown-watered canals and wooden bridges spanning across. It can be said that this is Cuba's U Minh jungle.

At the Museum of Science in Havana I saw the kind of molluscs, butterflies and a host of other insects that exist in our Nam Can, Plain of Reeds and on Mount Dien Ba. Sierra Maestra, the base area of Cuban revolution, appeared like the jungle of easternmost Nam Bo.

This similitude of geographic conditions, to a degree, accounts partly for the similitude of temperament of the two peoples half the earth apart geographically, and heartfelt mutual affection boundless.

But something deeper, stronger and much greater lies at the bottom of the sentiments that the Vietnamese and Cuban peoples entertain for each other. That is their struggle for survival against the common enemy, who has been raining bombs and bullets and spraying toxic chemicals on Viet Nam's villages, who bombarded Cuba's sugar refineries, and landed troops on Playa Giron. It is the same enemy who has been pouring surplus goods into South Viet Nam to strangle its economy, and blockading Cuba to stifle it economically. US imperialism which is occupying Da Nang, Vung Tau, Tay Ninh also sticks to Guantanamo. Therefore, in resisting American aggression we also fight for Cuba, and inversely. That's the tie which binds these anti-US fighters, one on the Eastern and the other on the Western Hemisphere. That's what strengthens the solidarity and friendship between the two fraternal peoples.

Those feelings have been condensed by Fidel Castro in unforgettable words: "For Viet Nam we stand ready to shed our own blood."

In his meeting with journalists of all countries present at the Congress, or with the Indochinese separately, he reaffirmed his country's international obligations: "Viet Nam has been doing a great deal for humanity. Cuba's duty, our duty is to uphold their cause."

HUYNH VAN LY

(To be continued)

A view of the Cuban village named "Ben Tre province," the cradle of South Viet Nam's 1959-1960 concerted uprisings